

LD4L Labs Press Release

Grant will help Cornell University Library improve information access by scholars

New tools and methods will enrich scholarly research

Cornell University Library will develop new tools and methods to better describe libraries' scholarly information resources and share those descriptions among different institutions, thanks to a new grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

In collaboration with the libraries of Harvard and Stanford universities and library researchers at the University of Iowa, Cornell has been awarded a \$1.5 million, two-year grant to help libraries use linked data to improve the exchange and understanding of information about scholarly resources. The project team aims to have tools, services and solutions available that research libraries could use at their own institutions within the next three to five years.

"This will let us do things we couldn't do before, such as connect and describe our resources in a more detailed and interesting way," said Dean Krafft, chief technology strategist for Cornell University Library. "Ultimately, it will let scholars and researchers find and understand library and archival information resources more easily."

For example, Krafft said, descriptions of items in Cornell University Library's Hip Hop Collection, such as annotated LP recordings from hip-hop's earliest days, could now be linked to MusicBrainz.org, an open online music database, to get additional information about artists or albums that will give researchers greater context.

"Now when we describe those recordings, we'll actually be able to get information about an album release, or an artist, or an event that featured the album, that we wouldn't have been able to access before," Krafft said.

The new tools will improve descriptions of everything in the library's catalog, including books, journals and research datasets, as well as special collections such as hip-hop, maps, and works of art.

Cornell is also participating in a companion project based at Stanford University Libraries, which seeks to transition the functions of library technical services to linked data, so libraries can use these new tools to produce information communally. While the two projects are separate, each is expected to advance the goals of the other.

Linked Data is a way of expressing data in large networks of related information on the Internet so that computers can make connections among different collections with a minimum of prior agreement.

The new grant is a follow-up to a 2014 Mellon grant, which helped the partner libraries to create systems and gather information from each other. The upcoming project will build on that work, developing practical tools that will allow scholars to take advantage of the shared information for better, more efficient research.

More information on both projects is available at the Linked Data for Libraries (LD4L) website: <http://ld4l.org>